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Message Text

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50
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 EURE-00 OMB-01 NIC-01 CIAE-00

COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00

PM-03 H-02 L-02 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 EA-06 SAJ-01 OPR-02 /090 W
---------- 102122
P R 181426Z MAR 75
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9378
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
USMISSION OECD PARIS
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMCONSUL BELFAST
AMCONSUL EDINBURGH
AMCONSUL LIVERPOOL

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, UK
SUBJECT: THE SHELEPIN AFFAIR - THE FAT'S IN THE FIRE

REF: LONDON 3455

1. SUMMARY: THE HOME SECRETARY ROY JENKINS INFORMED
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THE COMMONS YESTERDAY THAT A VISA WILL BE GRANTED TO

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ALEXANDER SHELEPIN, HEAD OF THE SOVIET AUCCTU, MEMBER OF THE POLITBURO AND FORMER HEAD OF THE KGB, TO VISIT BRITAIN WITH A DELEGATION FOLLOWING AN INVITATION FROM THE BRITISH TUC. THE HOME SECRETARY TOLD THE COMMONS THAT GRANTING A VISA DID NOT INDICATE "APPROVAL OR DISAPPROVAL OF A PARTICULAR PERSON OR A PARTICULAR VISIT". END SUMMARY.

2. MR. JENKINS WAS CLEARLY AWARE OF THE STORM OF PROTEST WHICH THE INVITATION TO SHELEPIN AND HIS ASSOCIATES HAS ENGENDERED AND HE WAS ALSO SENSITIVE TO THE FACT THAT DEMONSTRATIONS OF PROTEST WILL BE MOUNTED WHEN THE DELEGATION ARRIVES IN THIS COUNTRY. HE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE DEMONSTRATIONS "WILL BE PEACEFUL". A SOURCE IN THE HOME OFFICE TOLD US THAT OF THE EXPECTED TEN MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION, SIX WILL BE SECURITY AGENTS. (HE SURMISED ALSO THAT ONE OF THE REMAINING FIVE "PRINCIPALS" IS LIKELY TO BE AN INTERPRETER. A CONCERN FOR THE SECURITY OF THEIR GUESTS AND FEAR OF UGLY DEMONSTRATIONS MAY HAVE COMBINED SO FAR IN A REFUSAL BY THE TUC TO PROVIDE ANY DETAILS OF PROGRAMS BEING PLANNED FOR THE DELEGATION, NAMES OF THE MBERS, OR EVEN THE ETA.)

3. THE HIGH SECURITY MEN-TO-PRINCIPAL RATIO OBVIOUSLY REFLECTS A WELL-PLACED CONCERN ABOUT THE BITTER REACTION THUS FAR EXPRESSED BY MANY, INCLUDING A NUMBER OF ANTI-SOVIET EMIGRE AND JEWISH GROUPS, AMONG OTHERS, OVER THE SHELEPIN VISIT. MOREOVER, 104 MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT -- FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE HOUSE -- HAVE SIGNED PROTESTS, AND THERE HAS BEEN A SIGNIFICANT NEGATIVE PRESS REACTION EITHER TO THE VISIT, TO SHELEPIN PERSONALLY OR TO BOTH. (WE HAVE POUCHED REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLES OF PRESS REACTION.)

4. TRADE UNION REACTION HAS BEEN MUTED, HOWEVER. OTHER THAN A NEGATIVE STATEMENT BY FRANK CHAPPLE, LEADER OF THE ELECTRICAL AND PLUMBING TRADE UNION, WE HAVE SEEN NO PUBLIC COMMENTARY BY ANY TRADE UNION LEADER ATTACKING THE VISIT. ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE HAVE BEEN ONLY A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FEW TUC LEADERS, SUCH AS CLIVE JENKINS, HUGH SCANLON AND GEOFFREY DRAIN (THE LATTER IS HEAD OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS - NALGO, ONE NOT NORMALLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE TUC LEFT-WING) WHO HAVE PUBLICLY WELCOMED THE SOVIET LEADER. HOWEVER, DAVID BASNETT GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE GENERAL AND MUNICIPAL WORKERS (GMWU), WHO TOLD US THAT HE WAS NOT HAPPY WITH THE VISIT, MAY HAVE BEEN EXPRESSING A WIDER SENSE OF DISCOMFITURE

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BY TUC GENERAL COUNCIL MEMBERS. EVEN SCANLON HAS EX-
PRESSED TO US HIS UNEASE ABOUT THE IDEA OF A FORMER KGB
HEAD BEING CURRENTLY THE LEADER OF A TRADE UNION CENTER.
BUT, AS ONE KEEN OBSERVER OF TRADE UNION LEFT-RIGHT PO-
LITICS TOLD US, ONCE THE INVITATION WAS MADE THE TUC
"JOINED RANKS" AGAINST OPPOSITION TO IT. HE EXPECTS RE-
LATIVELY LITTLE ORGANIZED PROTEST ALTHOUGH HE BELIEVES
THAT MANY TRADE UNION MEMBERS MUST FIND THE WHOLE AFFAIR
QUITE DISTASTEFUL.

RICHARDSON

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